## Message Text

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UNCLAS THE HAGUE 6880

E.O. 11652: N/A TAGS: ENRG, NL, EALR

SUBJ: DUTCH DOMESTIC NATURAL GAS PRICE TO RISE

1. DURING PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON HIS MINISTRY'S 1977 BUDGET ECONMIN LUBBERS FORESHADOWED A GRADUAL INCREASE IN DOMESTIC PRICE OF NATURAL GAS FOR SMALL CONSUMERS FROM PRESENT 0.20 GUILDER PER CUBIC METER TO 0.33 - 0.34 GUILDER PER CUBIC METER IN 1980 (I.E. FROM 8.0 TO 13.2 - 13.6 US CENTS AT CURRENT RATE OF 2.50 GULDERS EQUAL \$1.00). INCREASE WOULD BE DESIGNED TO BRING GAS PRICE IN LINE WITH DOMESTIC FUEL OIL PRICE. GAP AT PRESENT IS ABOUT 0.07 TO 0.08 GUILDER. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT AN ESTIMATED ANNUAL INCREASE IN FUEL OIL PRICE OF FIVE PERCENT, NATURAL GAS PRICE IN 1980 WOULD HAVE TO BE INCREASED TO 0.13 TO 0.14 GUILDER PER CUBIC METER.

2. LUBBER'S PLAN TO RAISE PRICE OF NATURAL GAS REFLECTS GON'S ENERGY CONSERVATION STRATEGY, WHICH IS TO SLOW THE GROWTH OF ENERGY CONSUMPTION. IT IS HOPED THAT INCREASE IN NATURAL GAS PRICE WILL ALSO ENCOURAGE CONSUMERS TO INSTALL ENERGY CONSERVATION DEVICES AND TO INSULATE HOMES AND BUILDINGS.

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